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News Release ~ Communiqué

Government Upholds licensing of Television Specialty Service

OTTAWA, September 2, 1994 The Government of Canada has upheld the licensing of the new specialty French-language television service Réseau de l'information (RDI). Canadian Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy said today that the service will be able to proceed without further delay.

The RDI service was among 10 Canadian specialty services that were licensed by the CRTC last June and are expected to be available to cable television subscribers beginning in January, 1995. The government received various petitions regarding the RDI service, seeking to have the CRTC reconsider its decision to issue the license and hold new hearings or to have the government set aside the CRTC decision.

Following a thorough review of the petitions, the government has decided to uphold the original licensing decision to ensure that the new RDI service can proceed without delay.

The Minister said that the government feels the RDI will provide valuable service to francophone audiences all across Canada, as well as to anglophones who want to access French-language services.

Some petitioners had expressed concern that RDI might not be available to cable subscribers outside Quebec, and the government shared this concern. However, the President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has sent a letter of commitment to Mr. Dupuy stating that if there is not sufficient distribution outside of Quebec, the CBC will return to the CRTC to seek mandatory carriage of the service by cable company operators. The CBC would do so no later than January 1, 1995, and sooner, if necessary, to ensure that RDI is offered to cable subscribers. The government fully supports this position.

A copy of the CBC letter of commitment is attached.

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